

Message Text

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TO USDEL SECRETARY PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 310960 TOSEC 340018

EXDIS

FOL TEL SENT ACTION SECSTATE FROM CAIRO DTD 27 DEC 1976 QTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 17770

EXDIS

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OTRA (AQL, BASIL)

SUBJECT: PROPOSED VISIT OF PLO REP BASIL AQL

REF (A) STATE 300580, (B) CAIRO 17101

1. A FEW DAYS AFO AMR MUSA, ACTING CHEF DE CABINET
FOR FAHMY DURING OSMA EL-BAZ'S ABSENCE IN U.S.,
TELEPHONED TO ASK STATUS OF THE EGYPTIAN VISA REQUEST
FOR BASIL AQL. FAHMY HAD INSTRUCTED HIM TO DO SO.
I TOLD MUSA THAT I HAD INFORMED OSAMA EL-BAZ TWO
WEEKS EARLIER THAT THE TIMING OF SUCH A VISIT WAS
NOT PROPITIOUS AND THAT IT WOULD NOT BE PRUDENT TO
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ISSUE A VISA AT THIS TIME. I ASSUMED EL-BAZ HAD
CONVEYED THIS TO FAHMY. JUDGING FROM MUSA'S SURPRISED
REACTION, E-BAX HAD OBVIOUSLY NEGLECTED TO DO SO.
MUSA SAID HE WOULD ADVISE FAHMY OF OUR POSITION.

2. WHEN MEETING WITH FAHMY TODAY, HE AGAIN RAISED

THE MATTER. HE PROFESSED NOT TO BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND WHY WE SHOULD REFUSE TO GIVE AQL A VISA. AQL, ACCORDING TO FAHMY, HAS NO OFFICIAL PLO POSITION. FAHMY CLAIMED HE WAS NOT EVEN SURE THAT AQL BELONGS TO FATAH. WHEN I REMINDED HIM THAT AQL HAD MET WITH VARIOUS SENATORS AS A SPOKESMAN FOR ARAFAT, HE AGREED THAT AQL ACTS AS ONE OF ARAFAT'S "BRAIN TRUST" PEOPLE. HE INSISTED, HOWEVER, THAT AQL HAS NEVER BEEN INVOLVED IN PLO ACTIVITIES AND CERTAINLY NOT IN TERRORIST ACTIVITIES. SINCE WE HAD NO OBJECTION TO WALID KHALIDI TAKING THE TEMPER OF AMERICAN ACADEMIC THINKING ON THE PLO AND THE PALESTINIANS, WHY SHOULD WE OBJECT TO AQL GOING FOR A FEW WEEKS TO ASSIST KHALIDI IN THIS MISSION. I REMINDED HIM THAT KHALIDI'S STATUS IS QUITE DIFFERENT. AS I UNDERSTOOD IT, KHALIDI IS ON A YEAR'S TEACHING GRANT AT THE HARVARD MIDDLE EAST CENTER.

3. WITH SOME SHOW OF ANNOYANCE, FAHMY REITERATED HIS FREQUENT CHARGE THAT OUR POLICY TOWARD THE PLO IS SHORT-SIGHTED. WHEN WE NEED PLO HELP, SUCH AS DURING THE TWO BEIRUT EVACUATIONS, WE HAVE RUN TO GOE TO REQUEST IT TO INTERCEDE WITH THE PLO AND GOE HAS REGULARLY DONE SO. THE PLO HAD COOPERATED FULLY IN THE BEIRUT EVACUATIONS, WHICH HAD BEEN PUBLICLY ACKNOWLEDGED BY A DEPT SPOKESMAN. IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, HE DID NOT SEE WHY WE CONTINUE OUR STANDOFF ATTITUDE TOWARD THE PLO. WHETHER WE LIKE IT OR NOT THE PLO HAVE BEEN DESIGNATED BY THE ARAB

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STATES TO REPRESENT THE PALESTINIANS. SOONER OR LATER THE USG WILL HAVE TO TALK TO THE PLO.

4. HE ASKED THAT I REQUEST YOU TO RECONSIDER THE BASIL AQL MATTER AND AUTHORIZE A VISA FOR THE LATTER. I TOLD HIM I WOULD CONVEY HIS COMMENTS, BUT HE SHOULD KNOW THAT THE PROSPECTS OF A REVERSAL ARE NOT GOOD. AS I WAS SURE HE UNDERSTOOD, THIS IS NOT A GOOD TIME FOR PLO VISITS TO THE US. SUCH A VISIT WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY ATTRACT ATTENTION AND AROUSE CONTROVERSY. IT IS NEITHER IN USG NOR GOE INTEREST TO GENERATE SUCH A CONTRAVERSY AT THIS TIME, WHICH CAN ONLY BE UNHELPFUL TO US-ARAB RELATIONS.

5. PLEASE INSTRUCT WHAT YOU WISH ME TO TELL FAHMY. EILTS UNQTE ROBINSON

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